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Suit Seeks to Block Domestic Spy Order

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A coalition of religious, political and educational groups filed suit yesterday accusing President Reagan of illegally authorizing the CIA and other agencies to engage in domestic spying.

The lawsuit, whose 36 plaintiffs include the National Council of Churches and one member of Congress, was filed in U.S. District Court and seeks to void an executive order signed Dec. 4 by Reagan.

The suit contends the order, which set more flexible guidelines for domestic spying than those approved by President Carter, violates the Constitution and conflicts with federal law barring domestic spying by the CIA.

"There are many aspects of the executive order that are flatly illegal," attorney Michael Ratner said in announcing the suit. "This follows along with the total lawlessness of the Reagan administration in a number of areas."